



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

June 24, 2019

Got Green and 350 Seattle

RE: Green New Deal Endorsement

Dear Seattle for a Green New Deal:

The Seattle City Councilmembers named below endorse your bold vision for a Green New Deal for Seattle, as outlined in your "Seattle for a Green New Deal: Endorsement Letter" attached here.

Seattle has long been proud to be a national leader in the environmental movement, but it's time for us to recognize that what is truly needed is environmental *justice*. We need to show how Seattle - a City that prides itself on its progressive values - can also lead the way in confronting the historical and current injustices that have created a society of deep racial and economic inequities.

We need bold community leaders like you to hold us accountable, and ensure that as public servants, we are creating the boldest and most visionary policies possible to meet the unprecedented crisis of climate change. Indeed, we need this more than ever. Despite the fact that Seattle has long been viewed as an environmental leader, in recent years our climate pollution has been *rising* — at the time we can least afford it. As you have clearly expressed, a Green New Deal for Seattle presents an opportunity to do much more than just reduce our pollution. The Green New Deal presents the opportunity to not only achieve a fossil fuel-free future for Seattle, but an equitable City where all are not only welcomed, but are valued, protected, and supported to thrive.

We admire how clearly you have articulated what a just and sustainable future for Seattle looks like, and what is required to achieve it. We need dramatic transitions in our energy, transportation, housing, and health systems. We need stronger plans and more resources for emergency preparedness, building community resilience, growing food locally, and safe places for people to go when air quality is poor.

Critical to all of these transitions is ensuring that workers are given the support and training to move away from jobs that exploit them and create pollution, to secure high-quality living wage, unionized jobs where every worker can earn enough to live comfortably in our great City, support a family and maintain dignity.

**We will work with you to identify progressive funding sources at the scale needed to bring about these transformations.**

Most importantly, we commit to centering solutions from the communities most impacted by



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

environmental issues – Black, Indigenous, People of Color and low-income communities – as we know that these communities are the experts on environmental justice due to their first-hand lived experience.

The following words from your letter resonated with us:

“Seattle has what it takes to be a global climate leader. We have communities who have been fighting injustice for generations, who can lead the way in showing how we take care of one another while demanding a healthy, stable future for all of us. We have neighborhoods striving for local resiliency. We have industries full of workers who are increasingly asking how they can use their skills and knowledge for the public good. We have city leaders who have time and again acknowledged that the climate crisis is not just fought at the U.N. or in D.C.; it’s fought and won here, where we live. This is the moment for all of us to come together and do what must be done for our common future.”

**We thank you for your leadership, express our support for developing a Green New Deal for Seattle, and commit to partnering with you to realize this vision and achieve a just and sustainable future for all Seattleites.**

Sincerely,

Council President Bruce Harrell

Councilmember Mike O'Brien

Councilmember Sally Bagshaw

Councilmember Lisa Herbold

Councilmember M. Lorena Gonzalez

Councilmember Abel Pacheco

Councilmember Kshama Sawant

Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda

Councilmember Debora Juarez

An equal opportunity employer

600 Fourth Avenue, Floor 2 | PO Box 34025, Seattle | Washington 98124-4025

Phone (206) 684-8804 Fax (206) 684-8587 TTY (206) 233-0025

Email [council@seattle.gov](mailto:council@seattle.gov)

# **Seattle for a Green New Deal:**

## **Endorsement Letter**

Dear Mayor Durkan and Seattle City Council Members,

Climate change threatens everything we love. Here in Seattle, heat waves have become the new normal, wildfire smoke chokes our summer skies, and our salmon and orcas are dying. These impacts are multiplied the world over, as rapidly increasing numbers of people and ecosystems are threatened by rising sea levels, deadly storms, drought and famine.

Despite its commitments to climate action, Seattle's climate pollution has been rising in recent years.<sup>i</sup> We can no longer respond to the climate emergency with incremental measures, or empty words. The climate crisis urgently necessitates an all-hands-on-deck mobilization.

**We, the undersigned, call for the creation of a transformative Green New Deal for Seattle that will eliminate our city's climate pollution by 2030, address historical and current injustices, and create thousands of good, green, well-paying, unionized jobs.**

Furthermore, we urge our city leaders to create a Green New Deal investment vehicle and a Green New Deal Task Force, which will decide how investments will be made, by *no later than the end of 2019*.

### **Using A Green New Deal To Eliminate Climate Pollution**

To reduce our climate pollution, Seattle's Green New Deal should invest in the build-out of tens of thousands of units of affordable housing, without displacing existing communities<sup>ii</sup>; more transportation access, including ubiquitous and free electric transit for all Seattle neighborhoods and bus routes that connect every community<sup>iii</sup>; the equitable transitioning of our city's 160,000 fossil fuel-heated homes to carbon-free, electric heating<sup>iv</sup>; and the weatherization of our housing stock.<sup>v</sup>

A Green New Deal for Seattle must also set up the infrastructure so our communities will be resilient to inevitable climate impacts, such as wildfire smoke, sea-level rise, in-migration, and extended droughts. By investing in local, just, and carbon-free food systems, our Green New Deal can help ensure food security for all residents. As we face sweltering heat and smoky summers, the Green New Deal must roll out universal access to filtered air spaces & cooling centers for the public. Seattle's Green New Deal must strive to do more than simply eliminate our climate pollution; it should seek to build a truly sustainable and just future. To that end, Seattle's Green New Deal should aspire to the goals articulated in the federal Green New Deal: good jobs, affordable housing, access to healthy food and affordable transit, as well as universal healthcare and childcare, should be guaranteed to all people residing in our country.



To ensure that we are not undermining our efforts to reduce climate pollution, Seattle's Green New Deal should be coupled with legislation ensuring that no new homes rely on by fossil fuels, and that new fossil fuel infrastructure is banned in the city.

### **Using A Green New Deal To Boost our Economy**

Eliminating our climate pollution by 2030 will require investing billions of dollars and creating thousands of jobs in our city. It will cost at least \$1.6 billion to transition Seattle's 160,000 fossil fuel-powered homes to electric heating<sup>vi</sup>; the weatherization of our housing stock could cost around \$800 million<sup>vii</sup>; and the cost of building tens of thousands of units of affordable housing will also be high. All of this, however, is far less expensive than *not* reducing our climate pollution.<sup>viii</sup> Furthermore, these investments will create thousands of jobs and benefit our economy.<sup>ix</sup> In addition to jobs in the traditional construction trades, Seattle's Green New Deal can create green job opportunities for artists, domestic workers, educators, health workers, gardeners, bus drivers, and more.

The jobs created by Seattle's Green New Deal investments, from janitors to construction workers, electricians to service workers, should be unionized and include Project Labor Agreements and Labor Harmony Agreements that would ensure high-quality work and fair treatment of workers. They should also utilize priority hire and be accessible to undocumented people and people with criminal records; being a Sanctuary City means being a place where no one is exploited, and no one thrown away. Additionally, all jobs created by our city's Green New Deal should apply all of Seattle's new worker protection laws: from paid family sick leave to the domestic workers bill of rights. Lastly, high schools in Seattle should add vocational training that provides a pathway to career-bound, green jobs.

### **Using Seattle's Green New Deal to address historical and current injustices**

While climate change affects everyone, communities of color and low-income communities are and will continue to be most negatively impacted.<sup>x</sup> This is especially true in Seattle, where environmental pollution is deeply segregated by race and class. Children growing up in the Duwamish Valley are three times more likely to suffer from asthma than those growing up in North Seattle.<sup>xi</sup> People living in South Park and Georgetown have an expected lifespan that's eight years shorter than the average Seattle resident, and 13 years shorter than the well-off neighborhood of Laurelhurst.<sup>xii</sup> Our Green New Deal investments must prioritize addressing these environmental injustices and center solutions from communities most impacted. To ensure that this is an integral part of our Green New Deal, individuals deeply rooted in communities of color; Native communities; and immigrant, refugee, and low income communities must be central to a Green New Deal Task Force that will approve how Seattle's Green New Deal investments are made.

Workers, organized labor and small business leaders must also be at the decision-making table; their input is essential to ensuring that Seattle's Green New Deal supports a thriving local green economy and that workers benefit from the transition away from fossil fuels. There should also

be a measure of flexibility in the rollout of different initiatives, so that neighborhoods can help choose the changes they see first.

To further ensure that justice is at the heart of Seattle's Green New Deal, the city should also establish a Free, Prior and Informed Consent policy with regional Tribes.<sup>xiii</sup>

### **Funding Seattle's Green New Deal**

There are numerous ways we can fund a city-wide transformation, and using multiple mechanisms will be most effective. We can put a climate emergency tax on big business<sup>xiv xv</sup>, we can price congestion<sup>xvi</sup>, we can put a one-off climate emergency levy to the voters<sup>xvii</sup>, we can re-purpose funds from the general fund, and we can dip into Seattle's existing rainy day fund.<sup>xviii</sup> Of course, all of these funding mechanisms will need to be rigorously studied before implementation. Washington state already has the most regressive tax system of any state in the country;<sup>xix</sup> it's critical that our Green New Deal funding mechanisms do not further unjustly burden low-income communities.

In addition, the City of Seattle must hold the fossil fuel industry accountable for its role in the climate crisis. We urge City Attorney Holmes to file litigation against the fossil fuel industry for knowingly causing global warming while spending tens of millions funding climate disinformation. Thirteen jurisdictions in the United States are already litigating the fossil fuel industry<sup>xx</sup>, and these lawsuits can help ensure that the corporations most responsible for the climate crisis pay their fair share.

But we must not wait for new funding sources to begin the work of a Green New Deal: all City departments should be assessing current spending by how that spending reduces climate pollution and achieves the City's environmental equity goals, as defined in the 2016 Equity and Environment Agenda.

### **The Path Forward**

While the climate crisis is global, cities matter; they are the source of most of the world's emissions, and the easiest places to implement change for large numbers of people. Major cities around the world are already responding to the climate emergency: Copenhagen is aiming for carbon neutrality by 2025<sup>xxi</sup> and Oslo by 2030<sup>xxii</sup>, and cities worldwide are announcing bans on internal combustion engines.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Seattle has what it takes to be a global climate leader. We have communities who have been fighting injustice for generations, who can lead the way in showing how we take care of one another while demanding a healthy, stable future for all of us. We have neighborhoods striving for local resiliency. We have industries full of workers who are increasingly asking how they can use their skills and knowledge for the public good. We have city leaders who have time and again acknowledged that the climate crisis is not just fought at the U.N. or in D.C.; it's fought

and won *here*, where we live. This is the moment for all of us to come together and do what must be done for our common future.

Future generations are depending on us. We must step up to this moment, and show what leadership looks like.

Sincerely,

**Got Green**

Jonathan Fikru, Young Leaders Organizer

**350 Seattle**

Jess Wallach, Organizer

**Mazaska Talks**

Matt Remle, Founder

**Sierra Club WA**

Brittney Bush Bollay, Chair Seattle Group

**El Centro De La Raza**

Estela Ortega, Executive Director

**Greenpeace USA**

Benjamin Smith, Field Organizing Manager

**Rainier Valley Corps**

Florence Sum, Fellowship Coordinator

**Fuse Washington**

Aaron Ostrom Executive Director

**Washington Physicians for Social  
Responsibility**

Mark Vossler, MD

**350.org**

KC Golden, Board Chair

**UAW Local 4121**

David Parsons President

**UAW Local 1981**

Louis McGill, Organizer

**Violet Lavati**

Tenants Union, Executive Director

**Mike O'Brien**

City of Seattle Councilmember

**Teresa Mosqueda**

City of Seattle Councilmember

**Kshama Sawant**

City of Seattle Councilmember

**Nikkita Oliver**

Artist, Attorney and Community Organizer

**Denis Hayes**

Environmental Leader

**Mike McGinn**

Former Seattle Mayor

**Kirsten Harris-Talley**

Former City of Seattle Councilmember

**Cary Moon**

Former Mayoral Candidate

**Tammy Morales**

City Council Candidate D2

**Christopher Peguero**

City Council Candidate Council D2

**Mark Solomon**

City Council Candidate D2

**Pat Murakami**

City Council Candidate, D3

**Cathy Tuttle**

City Council Candidate, D4

**Emily Myers**

City Council Candidate D4

**Shaun Scott**

City Council Candidate D4

**Heidi Stuber**

City Council Candidate D4

**John Lombard**

City Council Candidate D5

**Melissa Hall**

City Council Candidate D6

**Kara Ceriello**

City Council Candidate D6

**Michael George**

City Council Candidate D7

**Jason Williams**

City Council Candidate D7

**Dave Batistiti**

Professor of Atmospheric Sciences

**Nature Stewards**

Grace Stiller, President

**Rainforest Action Network**

Paddy McCully, Climate Director

**Transit Riders Union**

Katie Wilson, General Secretary

**Other 98**

John Sellers, Executive Director

**Friends of the Earth**

Karen Orenstein Deputy Director of Economic Policy

**Protectors of the Salish Sea**

Paul Chiyokten Wagner Founder

**Sunrise Seattle**

Kevin Pelstring, Coordinator

**Sunrise Movement**

Ahmed Gaya, National Field Director

**Families of Color Seattle**

Amy Pak, Executive Director

**For the People**

Derek Hoshiko, Organizer and Ellen Finkelstein, Board Member

**Plant for the Planet Washington**

Sue Lenander President

**Climate Action Families**

Emory Ranes, President

**South Seattle Climate Action Network**

Beth Brunton and Ann Miller, Coordinators

**Community Alliance for Global Justice**

Heather Day Executive Director

**Fridays for Future Seattle**

Joe Mangan and Lydia Ringer, Organizers

**Food and Water Watch**

Thomas Myers, Regional Organizing Manager

**Climate Solutions**

Gregg Smalls, Executive Director

**Vashon Climate Action Group**

Kevin Jones, Board Member

**Zero Hour**

Ethan Wright, Advocacy Director

**Share the Cities**

Laura Loe, Founder

**Mt. Baker Hub**

Eve Keller, Chair

**Mothers Out Front USA**

Jeanine San Clemente, Coordinator

**Capitol Hill Renter Initiative**

Jesse Simpson, Lead Organizer

**The Urbanist**

Doug Trumm, Publication Director

**West Seattle Unitarian Social Justice Coalition**

Anne Miller, Chair

**Real Change**

Tiffani McCoy, Lead Organizer

**Hedgebrook**

Cam Williams Bernhard, Staff

**Full Circle Environmental**

David Sitzhal, President

**Dylan Cate Strategic**

Dylan Cate, Principal

**Emerald Cities Collaborative**

Steve Gelb, Local Director

**Legal Voice**

Courtney Chappell, Advocacy Director

**Re-Think Green**

Julia Sandler, Founder

**Byrd Barr Place**

Andrea Caupain, CEO

**Marcia Baker**

Professor Emerita of Earth and Space Sciences

**Dargas Frierson**

Professor of Atmospheric Sciences

**MOAR**

Matt Hutchins, Cofounder

**Pacific NW Conference United Church of Christ**

Mike Denton, Conference Minister

**Keystone Church**

Rich Gamble, Pastor

**Panim Hadashot**

Rabbi Dov Gartenberg, Founder

**St. Paul's Church**

Tim Devine, Pastor

**Bethany United Church of Christ**

Reverend Angela Ying

**The Nest in the Heart of the City**

Suzanne Greenberg, Owner

**Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources**

Diane Shisk, Director of Operations

**Grateful Bread**

Chris Lahoda, Owner

**Red Crow Studio**

Jacque Hill, Owner

**Mangia Bene**

Debbie Brownstein, Owner

**Kathy's Corner Café**

Katy Leighton, Owner

**Royal Room**

Tia Matthies

**Conscious Cartoons**

Bill Jarcho, Festival Director

**North Seattle Guitar Lessons**

Jared Borkowski, Owner

**Say Yes to Life Swims**

Guila Muir, Owner

**United to End Racism**

Teresa Enrico, Chair

**League of Women Voters Seattle-King County**

Heather Kelly, Action Chair and 2<sup>nd</sup> VP

**Squirrel Chops**

Shirley Henderson, Owner

**Stockbox Neighborhood Grocery**

Carrie Ferrence, Owner



**Mountain to Sound Outfitters/Alki Kayak  
Tours**

Greg and Kara Whittaker, Owners

**2 Sisters Ecotextiles**

Patty Grossman, Co-Owner

**Alki Bike**

Stu Hennessey, Owner

**WR Consulting, Inc**

Marian Wineman, Owner

**Stevens Pass Climate Team**

Rusty West, Organizer

**Parents for Future Seattle**

Helene Costa, Founding Member

**Studio Azul**

Lily Christensen, Business

**Beacon Hill Safe Streets**

Robert Getch, Chair

**Center for Healing Neurology**

Ilene Runoy, Founder and Medical Director

**Kavana Cooperative\***

**Kadima\***

**Sustainable West Seattle\***

**Food Systems Coalition\***

**University Unitarian Church Climate Action\***

**People for Climate Action Seattle\***

**Indivisible Seattle\***

\*signers requested organization name listed only

---

<sup>i</sup> City of Seattle, 2016 Seattle Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, available at <https://www.seattle.gov/environment/climate-change/climate-planning/performance-monitoring>

<sup>ii</sup> Building low-income housing near transit results in the greatest carbon pollution reduction per dollar spent – which means by making massive investments in affordable housing Seattle's Green New Deal would not only help address our housing crisis, but also reduce climate pollution. For more see Got Green, *Our People, Our Power, Our Planet*; [http://gotgreenseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OurPeopleOurPlanetOurPower\\_GotGreen\\_Sage\\_Final1.pdf](http://gotgreenseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OurPeopleOurPlanetOurPower_GotGreen_Sage_Final1.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Passenger vehicles are responsible for nearly half of Seattle's current carbon pollution – a Green New Deal should prioritize investments in alternative transportation options that enable people to get out of their cars, while also contributing to the creation of

---

vibrant, walkable neighborhoods with plentiful civic space and green space

<sup>iv</sup> There are currently over 160,000 homes in Seattle that are heated by fossil fuels. Transitioning all of those homes to electric heating would reduce our climate pollution and create thousands of good-paying, union jobs in our city.

<sup>v</sup> Retrofitting Seattle homes to be more energy efficient would mean not only reducing climate pollution but also thousands of good union jobs, and lower monthly utility bills for Seattle residents

<sup>vi</sup> It costs at least \$10,000 to transition a single home from fossil fuels to electric heat. With that in mind, it will cost at least \$1.6 billion to transition all of Seattle's 160,000 fossil fuel-powered homes to electric heat. These costs should be fully covered by Seattle's Green New Deal, not by renters or homeowners.

<sup>vii</sup> It costs at least \$5,000 to weatherize an average sized single-family home. With that in mind, it will cost at least \$800 million to weatherize all of Seattle's housing stock. These costs should be fully covered by Seattle's Green New Deal, not by renters or homeowners.

<sup>viii</sup> Leading EPA climate scientists have estimated that the anticipated cost of climate change to the United States will be at least \$224 billion per year by 2090 if we do not radically reduce our emissions. For more see Yale Climate Communications, Climate Change Could Cost U.S. Economy Hundreds of Billions,

<https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2019/04/climate-change-could-cost-u-s-economy-billions/>

<sup>ix</sup> See Forbes, The Economic Case for a Green New Deal, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/washingtonbytes/2019/02/20/the-economic-case-for-the-green-new-deal/>

<sup>x</sup> Among the many findings in the 2018 U.S. Fourth National Climate Assessment was the fact that "People who are already vulnerable, including lower-income and other marginalized communities, have lower capacity to prepare for and cope with extreme weather and climate-related events and are expected to experience greater impacts." For more, see the Fourth National Climate Assessment summary at: <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

<sup>xi</sup> For more, Toxic News, *Seattle's Segregated Landscape*; [www.toxicnews.org/2019/02/21/seattles-segregated-risks](http://www.toxicnews.org/2019/02/21/seattles-segregated-risks)

<sup>xii</sup> For more, *The Seattle Times*, Study Finds Life Is Shorter For Some in the 98108 Zip Code; <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/study-finds-life-is-shorter-for-some-in-the-98108-zip-code/>

<sup>xiii</sup> Washington State's Attorney General recently announced a Free, Prior and Informed Consent policy that, "requires the Attorney General's Office to obtain free, prior and informed consent before initiating a program or project that directly and tangibly affects tribes, tribal rights, tribal lands and sacred sites. This is especially relevant in Seattle watersheds, rivers and Puget Sound basin, where the Muckleshoot and Suquamish have traditional fishing rights

<sup>xiv</sup> From Amazon to the Ash Grove cement plant, our city's biggest businesses are also our largest polluters, and they should pay their fair share. To ensure that they do, we could raise the city's B&O Tax on the city's largest businesses. For more on B&O taxes see: <https://www.seattle.gov/business-licenses-and-taxes/business-license-taxes>;

<sup>xv</sup> Additionally, Seattle could implement a measure similar to Portland's Clean Energy Fund, which passed at the ballot in 2018 with 64% of the vote. Portland's "Clean Energy Surcharge" applies a 1% tax to large retailers with annual tax year total gross income from retail sales of \$1 billion or more in the U.S. and \$500,000 or more within the City of Portland, excluding utilities, co-ops, credit unions, and sales of qualified groceries, medicine or drugs, and health care services. Portland's Clean Energy Surcharge is expected to raise between \$54 million and \$71 million annually. For more details, see Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund FAQs, <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/713039>

<sup>xvi</sup> New York, London, Stockholm, Oslo and many other cities around the world have already implemented a congestion price. Fourteen years of the London congestion charge has enabled \$2 billion investment in the city's transportation infrastructure -- see Transportation of London website for more: <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/transparency/freedom-of-information/foi-request-detail?referenceId=FOI-2271-1617>

<sup>xvii</sup> In February 2019, Seattle voters passed two public schools levies that will raise over \$2.2 billion over six years.

<sup>xviii</sup> The City of Seattle has \$51.1 million set aside for spending on unforeseen costs. The climate crisis warrants the City using some of this money to seed its Green New Deal Fund.

<sup>xix</sup> Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax System in all 50 States*, <https://itwp.org/new-report-finds-that-upside-down-state-and-local-tax-systems-persist-contributing-to-inequality-in-most-states/>

<sup>xx</sup> Eight cities and counties in California, as well as municipalities in Colorado and Washington state, the cities of Baltimore and New York and the state of Rhode Island have already filed civil lawsuits against several oil and gas companies. For more, see, *Inside Climate News*, Fossil Fuels on Trial: Where the Major Climate Change Lawsuits Stand Today, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/04042018/climate-change-fossil-fuel-company-lawsuits-timeline-exxon-children-california-cities-attorney-general>

---

<sup>xxi</sup> For more see *The Guardian*, Copenhagen's Ambitious Push to be Carbon Neutral by 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/apr/12/copenhagen-push-carbon-neutral-2025>

<sup>xxii</sup> For more see the City of Oslo's Climate and Energy Strategy, retrieved at <https://www.oslo.kommune.no/english/politics-and-administration/green-oslo/plans-and-programmes/#gref>

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Business Insider*, 13 Cities That Are Starting To Ban Cars, retrieved at <https://www.businessinsider.com/cities-going-car-free-ban-2017-8#berlin-is-building-bike-super-highways-9>